

Balisong Report

Burton Richardson

My opinions along with facts or data I considered when forming them

I believe that all law abiding citizens should be able to defend themselves against criminal aggression. Criminals are predators who prey upon individuals that they believe to have a physical advantage over. Therefore, they target the weak or they employ weapons to create a terrifying advantage over their empty-handed victims. Then there is the multiple attacker scenario where a group descends upon an innocent person.

This means that the victim of a criminal aggression will always be at a disadvantage. An aggressor will not attack someone who appears formidable. Bullies do not want to get in a fight – they want to be able to absolutely dominate their victims. Therefore, citizens who are attacked have little recourse if not armed. They have been chosen as victims because the attacker or attackers have deemed them to be easy prey.

Using a weapon in self-defense is one of the only ways to equalize such a situation. Without a weapon, all advantage skews toward the criminal element. This actually emboldens and engenders more crime because the criminals need only worry about law-enforcement after the fact. The victim will be a pushover, especially if they are empty-handed. Giving the lawful citizen the ability to defend him or herself against criminal attack is essential in a just civilization.

I believe that the 2nd Amendment guarantees the right for citizens to keep and bear arms and that the right shall not be infringed upon.

Why the Balisong?

The Balisong (butterfly knife) is a self-defense weapon which is very popular in the Philippines, especially in the northern areas. My research in the Philippines and my 40 years of training with the weapon in the United States and abroad bear out that self-defense is its intended use. To back this up, I will recount the following story where a young lady from Batangas, the home of the Balisong gave me an impromptu demonstration and her use of the knife was 100% self-defense.

Manila, Philippines Balisong story

Exhibit "D"

Whenever I am in the Philippines I strike up conversations with local people hoping to find someone who is trained in the Filipino martial arts. I have gleaned great information and insight from such impromptu interviews from taxi drivers, clerks, and once from a lawyer.

While working on a movie in the Philippines, I was in a restaurant in the city of Marikina, Metro Manila. I was the only patron. A young lady was serving, and I asked her where she was from. She replied Batangas. I said, oh, the birthplace of the Balisong. I asked her if she knew how to use a Balisong. Sheepishly, she replied “My father taught me, but just a little”. She said it was common for Batanguenos (residents of the province of Batangas, the birthplace of the Balisong) to carry a Balisong for self-defense. So her father taught her so she would be able to arm herself in a dangerous situation. I asked her if she would mind showing me something of what she learned and, after some coaxing, she agreed.

I handed her a butter knife and stood up. I noticed that she secured the knife in the ice pick grip, which I found odd because this hold is widely considered to be a disadvantageous grip in the Filipino martial arts. A person has less reach and diminished mobility when dealing with an attacker at long range. I thought that was interesting since she had actually learned in Batangas, one of the most renowned spots in the world for knife technique.

I said, “imagine I am an attacker”. I started toward her and she said oh no not like that. Sneak up and grab me from behind. I went toward her back and approached as requested. As I grabbed, she brushed my hand down, rotated to her left toward me, did a lightning fast stab towards my midsection, and moved away. I mean, this was extremely quick and shockingly powerful. It is clear that she had been drilled in this extensively. Very effective.

As I spoke to her about her training, her entire training was based on someone trying to grab her to get her into a car or drag her into an alley. Her training was to use the Balisong as a self-defense weapon so she could defend her self against a sudden attack. She commented that most of her girlfriends in Batangas were also trained and armed with a Balisong. The primary use of the Balisong is for self-defense purposes.

From a moral standpoint, the Balisong is a unique self-defense knife because it can be use closed as well as open. It has an ethical use of force continuum built-in. When the defender fights back against criminal aggression with a Balisong, he or she doesn't have to immediately go to deadly force. A closed Balisong can be used as a “pocket stick”, providing less lethal blunt force. Skillful striking with the Balisong while it is still closed can possibly repel an attacker without having to resort to cutting. Morally, this is always preferable. If the situation is indeed dire, the blade can be employed to save the life of the innocent. But, unlike all the legal folders, the holder of a Balisong can choose a lower level of force if that can resolve the attack.

The Balisong provides the holder with the ability to use an even lower level of force to dissuade an inevitable attack. They can manipulate the Balisong to intimidate the attacker. The bully is the one who wants to intimidate his weaker victim. A Balisong practitioner can take out the knife and go through a quick series of flipping maneuvers to turn the tables and intimidate the attacker and convince them to go away. Due to the unique design of the Balisong, a potential injurious situation can be resolved without contact of any kind. I will relate the following story that my sister observed in my hometown of Carson, California where this tactic was successfully employed.

Carson, California Balisong story

I grew up in Carson, California in a house on Sepulveda Boulevard between Main Street and Figueroa. At the Figueroa end of Sepulveda is Carriage Crest Park. My sister Angela (4 years my junior) got a job there when she was in her late teens. She knew of my love of the Balisong (I had taught her a few moves), and was eager to relate the story when I came home from college for a weekend visit. This is what she told me:

She was working in the office and had seen 4 young Filipino boys, probably in their early teens, on the basketball court. They had clearly arrived very recently from the Philippines. Small in stature, heavy Filipino accent, and their clothing sense was in line with the province that they came from. New arrivals was a common occurrence in Carson, as it had a high population of Filipinos and is still a common destination for immigrants. Unfortunately, they were also targets of bigots.

They were minding their own business shooting hoops when a group of 5 older, much larger, Samoans showed up and decided they wanted the entire court to themselves. So, they just went up to the smaller Filipinos and started bullying them to make them leave.

My sister noticed this, so she left the office to intervene. She hadn't gone far when one of the Filipinos drew his Balisong and flipped it opened it in an impressive fashion. The bullies all turned tail and flew out of there, scattering in all directions as they made their escape. The problem solved without any violence. A great example of how the Balisong opening alone can intimidate and dissuade a bully or bullies from continuing.

Note also that the Balisong was a common self-defense weapon in Carson. That same sister carried a butterfly knife that I gave her in 1981 during late high school years and throughout college for self-defense. She would always have it with her in case she needed to protect herself. Thankfully it was never necessary.

As to the argument against quick-opening knives being an issue, the Balisong is a folding knife that is actually less "tactical" than the majority of quick opening folding knives that are on the market today. The Balisong is an arm that is intended to be opened with one hand, and that

requires skill on the part of the person armed with the Balisong. It takes a lot of practice to be able to open the knife quickly and efficiently with one hand, and even with such training, the Balisong is still slower than the most popular self-defense knives that are available and legal to carry. We will provide a video that demonstrates this. Here are the findings:

I will also present a video of me demonstrating drawing speeds of the Balisong versus a folder with the wave feature (for faster opening) and a traditional folder. The Balisong will be in the pocket, as it has no clip. The folders will be clipped to the pocket, which is the normal carrying method. This provides for easier access. The Balisongs do not have a clip because it would interfere with manipulating the handles.

Drawing speeds of Balisong versus modern folding knives drawing and opening times.

Balisong- carried in pocket.

To draw a Balisong, you have to thrust your hand deep into your pocket, grip the knife handles, and pull the closed Balisong out. With luck, it will stay in the optimal opening orientation where you can easily get your pinky on the clip to open it. If not, the closed Balisong must be rotated to access the latch. For the video, I placed it in my pocket in the optimal orientation so I will be able to draw at the quickest speed possible.

Once out and in the proper orientation, you must perform a manipulation to open the knife. There are many methods, but I opted for showing the most common, simple, high percentage opening that is used.

Once the blade is exposed, the handles of most butterfly knives will be wobbly and unstable until clip latch is closed and the handles secured. But for the video, I did not include this in the timing, as it is possible to use the Balisong unlatched. It is just less stable.

For maximum stability, it is necessary to close the latch to stabilize the knife in the open position. This usually takes two hands on most Balisong knives.

Folder with Wave Feature – clipped to pocket

Most folders today have a clip on the side of the handle so that the knife can be clipped inside a pocket or waistband. This makes it much more accessible than carrying it inside a pocket, as is necessary with a Balisong. The design makes opening with one hand very easy.

The wave feature is a notch added to the back spine of a folding knife that catches on the pant pocket or waistband when drawing. As the handle comes out, the wave feature makes the blade rotate out. The result is that the knife opens as the draw is made. You don't need to draw and then open the latch and then make the manipulation to open the knife as you do with a Balisong. You draw and it is open. It is extremely fast.

Standard folding knife- clipped to pocket

A standard folding knife has no wave opening feature or other quick-opening feature such as a Spyder hole (a hole in the top of the blade that you pinch to flick the knife open) or a thumb stud (a post that allows the knife to be opened with the thumb). All of these features allows the knife to be open with one hand. The standard folding knife has none of these, so must be opened using both hands. Contrary to popular belief, this is actually an extremely fast opening.

Here are the times for the openings of the three different types of blades.

Single handed Balisong in pocket draw-

2.900 seconds

Single handed wave Folding knife clipped to pocket. (Has wave opening feature)

1.467 seconds

2 hand opening, folding knife clipped to pocket.

1.200 seconds

In my opinion, it would be better for people to carry a Balisong knife for self-defense as opposed to a folding knife. The Balisong provides more choices in levels of force during a scenario where self-defense is warranted. Its design poses absolutely no extra threat compared to legal folding knives. They should be legal to carry.

Qualifications

Richardson is recognized as one of the world's leading experts on the Filipino Martial Arts (FMA). These arts are based on edged weapon expertise. From sword to short knife to Balisong, the FMA are known for exceptional blade work. Richardson teaches seminars worldwide on FMA and other arts.

Richardson began his martial arts training in 1979, then began classes the following year under Dan Inosanto, protégé of Bruce Lee and the leading exponent of the Filipino Martial Arts in the world.

Richardson was an honor student at U.S.C., majoring in Biology while completing a 4-year honors program in writing and literature. Instead of going to medical school, Richardson decided to pursue his passion for self-defense. This led to a lifetime of constant research and development in the martial sciences.

Richardson has traveled the globe training with the greatest masters in various combat approaches. Besides training in his home town of Los Angeles for decades, Richardson trained in the Philippines (Kali/Eskrima/Arnis), Brazil (BJJ), China (San Shou), Japan (Shoot fighting), France (Savate), and even made several trips to the Zulu villages to learn their style of stick and spear fighting. He also trained extensively in MMA, especially under Team Quest headed by Randy Couture. Richardson was featured on the covers of various martial arts magazines and has authored 5 books. He wrote a monthly column for Inside Kung Fu magazine for over 10 years.

Credentials-

- Inside Kung Fu Magazine Hall Of Fame (1999)
- Inducted into the Black Belt magazine (#1 martial arts magazine in the world) Hall Of Fame (2015)
- Black Belt magazine self-defense instructor of the year (2015)
- Full Instructor (the highest rank achievable) in Jeet Kune Do under Dan Inosanto (Bruce Lee's protégé).
- Full Instructor under Dan Inosanto in the Filipino Martial Arts.
- Full Instructor in Jeet Kune Do under Larry Hartsell (student of Bruce Lee).
- 3 Stripe Black Belt in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu under world champion Egan Inoue/Nova Uniao.
- Original member of the famous full contact stick fighting group The Dog Brothers (Lucky Dog)
- Muay Thai instructor under Thai Boxing pioneer Master Chai Sirisute.
- Indonesian Pentjak Silat instructor under Grandmaster Paul DeThouars.
- Kali Ilustrisimo instructor under Grandmaster Antonio Ilustrisimo.
- MMA coach and corner man to Super Fight World Champion Egan Inoue 1995-2004

- MMA coach and corner man to Shooto World Champion Enson Inoue 1995- 1998
- MMA Head Coach for UFC great Chris Leben, 2009-2012.
- BJJ coach and corner man for BJJ World Champion Baret Yoshida, ADCCs 2003, 2005, 2007, 2017.

Books Published (No self-publishing)

JKD Unlimited - Unique Publications (1993)

In The Footsteps Of Bruce Lee – Budo international (1999)

Choke Em Out – Paladin Press (2007)

Silat For The Street – Black Belt publications (2016)

Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu For The Street – Black Belt Publications (Available 2020)

Published articles over the last 25 years

Black Belt magazine

How to beat an MMA fighter 02-08

Silat clinch - the secret weapon

Silat for the MMA era

Silat open hand

Bruce lee issue interview 6-09

Blitz magazine (Australia)

BJJ for the street - weapons on the ground

JKD interview

Grappling with weapons

The JKD-MMA connection

Budo International magazine

(translated into 5 languages, distributed worldwide)

Bruce lee's 5 ways

A martial clairvoyance

Battlefield kali

Be a hero

Bruce lee's 5 ways of attacking

Complete approach 5-04

Details

Environmental impact

Expectations 4-07

Getting your taps out of the way

Guiding principles 9-06

JKDU MMA for street- 04-05

Lessons from the ring 6-04

Our movie 11-06

Overcoming adversity 9-04

Pummeling - a sensitivity drill

Progressive resistance

Pushing your limits

Rules of engagement 06-04

Stand up! 06-04

Street vs sport

Surprise! 8-04

The benefits of discipline 02-07

The fighter's perspective 1-07

The importance of the clinch

The intersection 04-07

The keys of JKD

The scientific method

The secrets of JKD

The seminar tour 07-06

The two arts

Why sparring

Immersion Labs magazine

Stick fighting- common themes oceans apart

Inside Kung Ku magazine/unique publications

A lesson from Socrates

A little each day 8-09

Absorbing the useless

Achieving self

Artificial resistance 03-03

Being the learner

Bloody mess 08-02

China hands

Choke!

Dead pattern kali 07-02

Eric's story 05-03

Face your fears 2006

Feedback 07-03

Fighting the big guy 2000

Fight like a girl 09-02

Finish the choke

Fun fundamentals 1996

Get in the water 1998

Ground fighting 2006

High performance

Hitting the wall

In the clinch

Isness and ifness

JKD cutting through controversy

Kali wisdom

Lights out

Loyalty

Martial arts fantasy

Memorization versus performance 11-03

MMA moves that will get you killed in a street fight 7-10

My last offering 05-04

New and improved JKD

NHB versus JKD

Phasing out the phases 01-03

Question the answers

Reject what is useful 11-02

Resisting real resistance 03-03

Self-discipline

Shorite Ryu

Solo training

Stop complaining and start training

Street grappling, the JKD perspective

Street-specific training

Success through failure

The art of fighting without fighting 01-02

The complete fighter

The evolution of Bruce Lee

The evolution of Jeet Kune Do

The expert

The greatest benefit of MMA!

The JKD mish mash

The JKD test

The key to success 1996

The revolution rolls

The right to bear arms

The sculpter coach

The search for validation 08-03

The sticky subject of weaponry training 1999

The way you practice 12-02

What would Bruce Lee be doing today?

Wisdom of the ages 1993

Articles written for various magazines

Bubba dummy (ultimate MMA magazine)

Carlson Gracie, vale tudo training (ultimate grappling magazine)

Fight for success! 11-08 (MMA Hawaii magazine)

Interview with Rickson Gracie (ultimate grappling magazine)

“lucky dog’ speaks (manila times [Philippines] interview)

Training Chris Leben (MMA Hawaii magazine)

A list of all other cases in which, during the previous 4 years, the witness testified as an expert at trial or by deposition;

I have never testified as an expert at trial or by deposition

(vi) A statement of the compensation to be paid for the study and testimony in the case.

I will be compensated \$200/hour, which is my normal private lesson fee.

Burton Richardson

12-5-19

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Burton Richardson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.